

# CO-PARENTING WELCOME PACKET

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Navigating co-parenting after a separation or divorce can be challenging, but it's also an opportunity to create a stable, nurturing environment for your child.

This guidebook provides practical steps and information to help you prioritize your child's well-being, build a cooperative relationship with your co-parent, and foster a positive parenting dynamic across two homes. You can do this!

**Let's begin this journey together.**

# WELCOME



# THE CO-PARENTING JOURNEY

This guide outlines the key takeaways (what we call “parenting wins”) and actionable steps for each step of effective co-parenting.

Each step is designed to help you prioritize your child’s well-being, reduce conflict, and **build a collaborative partnership with your co-parent.**

Along the way, you’ll find practical advice, recommended actions, and insights to guide you through challenges and ensure a positive co-parenting experience for your family.



*“Effective co-parenting is one of the greatest gifts you can give your child. It fosters stability, emotional security, and the confidence they need to thrive in life.”*

Dr. Christy Kane PsyD, CMHC

# 8 STEPS OF EFFECTIVE CO-PARENTING

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1

**COMMITMENT  
TO CARING**

2

**ALLOWING MY  
CHILD TO LOVE  
BOTH PARENTS**

3

**CHANGING MY  
LONG-TERM  
ROLE**

4

**CHOOSING MY  
PERSONAL PATH**

5

**MANAGING  
ANGER**

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**TAKING  
CONTROL OF  
CONFLICT**

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**NEGOTIATING  
AGREEMENTS**

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**CO-PARENTING  
IS FOREVER**

# THE 8 STEPS

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1

## COMMITMENT TO CARING

Parents learn the difference between self-focused and child-focused parenting, & the 8 steps of effective co-parenting.

You can choose to do whatever it takes to improve the long-term wellbeing of your child. By committing to care, you give your child the gift of love. **No one else can do it for you.**

Continued contact with both parents can lead to a happier childhood. It is up to you to alter the pattern of tension that surrounds your child and interferes with their happiness.

- Avoid any conflict in your child's presence.
- Learn and practice new techniques for handling problematic situations.

### PARENTING WINS

- Recognize how conflict and hostility impact a child's emotional and developmental health.
- Commit to prioritize the needs of the child/children with a *Commitment to Caring Agreement*.



## 2

### ALLOWING MY CHILD TO LOVE BOTH PARENTS

Parents develop plans for peace and stability in a supportive, two-home environment.

Parents should embrace their child's two homes. Forcing a child to choose sides creates a tug-of-war that hinders their ability to love both parents.

**Children should feel like permanent members of each home, not visitors or guests.** Maintain access to extended family—loyalty binds!

- Don't put your child in situations where they are forced to choose one parent over the other.
- Show acceptance of both homes.
- Keep clothes and personal items for each child in each home.

#### PARENTING WINS

- Identify positive qualities in the other parent.
- Reduce stress during transitions.
- Create a supportive two-home environment.
- Recognize and stop behaviors that place children in the middle of conflict.

## 3

### CHANGING MY LONG-TERM ROLE

Explores emotional attachments to former partner. Reframes parental roles as co-parents, not ex-partners.

Holding onto the past relationship can eat away at your health and self-esteem. It also can cause significant stress for your child. You will be challenged to **let go of the past and to create a new co-parenting relationship.**

- Take time to grieve the loss of your relationship, lifestyle, shared intimacy, economic security, and the ideal family life you envisioned.

#### PARENTING WINS

- Release feelings of anger and bitterness
- Navigate the grief process, embrace forgiveness, and develop rituals to move forward.



## 4

### **CHOOSING MY PERSONAL PATH**

Helps parents build rituals for improved co-parenting communication

Ask yourself: Will you move forward to make the relationship better or keep it bitter? Your choice will deeply affect your child's future. This step encourages you emotionally disengage and to see your former partner solely as your child's other parent.

#### **PARENTING WINS**

- Define clear boundaries.
- Adopt professional, business-like co-parenting communication.
- Identify and overcome common obstacles.
- Apply principles of non-interference and conflict management.

## 5

### **MANAGING ANGER**

Delves into effective techniques for managing personal emotions, as well as emotional regulation in children.

Anger is often destructive, but it also has the power to be constructive. Anger can provide you with motivation to overcome obstacles. It can propel you to create a better future and nurturing environment for your child.

- Practice appropriate coping skills when your buttons are pushed.
- Channel your anger in active ways (gardening, walking, exercise, etc.)

#### **PARENTING WINS**

- Identify triggers with your co-parent that cause the most frustration.
- Develop plans for when triggers arise.
- Learn strategies to help your child calm and identify their emotions.

## 6

### TAKING CONTROL OF CONFLICT

Teaches parents conflict resolution and communication skills.

Remember, you have the power to start an argument or to **stop one from developing**. You don't have to light the fuse. Focus on the child's needs and keep yourself (and them) out of the crossfire.

- Recognize power-struggles, respond, and disengage when needed.

#### PARENTING WINS

- Develop skills to control your tone of voice, body language, and choice of words to defuse conflict.
- Discover where limit-setting techniques can be useful.
- Learn how to use reflective listening, active listening, and "I-statements."
- Ensure child safety in cases of past domestic violence or abuse.

## 7

### NEGOTIATING AGREEMENTS

Prepares parents for productive discussions on common issues with skills to problem-solve.

You and your co-parent won't always agree, and that's okay. Remember, conflict hinders solutions. **Focus on solution-oriented discussions centered on your child's best interests.** Co-parenting isn't about "winning"—it's about fostering healing, health, and your family's well-being.

- Focus solutions with "win-win" outcomes for your child.

#### PARENTING WINS

- Master the 7-step negotiation method.
- Gain problem-solving skills to address challenges.





# THE FINAL STEP

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8

## CO-PARENTING IS FOREVER

Parents apply what they've learned to real-world scenarios to improve cooperation and minimize conflict.

Co-parenting continues beyond therapy. Maintaining positive parent-child relationships before, during, and after separation is vital.

### **Commit to building a strong co-parenting partnership.**

- Finalize communications to the court(s) as required.
- Collaborate with trained professionals (therapists, attorneys, etc.) to develop agreements
- Resolve legal issues or lingering concerns in guided therapeutic mediation.

### PARENTING WINS

- Set-up for a successful future of co-parenting.
- Gift your child increased stability and wellbeing.





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# LET'S BEGIN!



*Thank you!*

Co-parenting is a journey of growth and teamwork—one step at a time, you are building a brighter, more secure future for your child and yourselves.

**You've got this!**



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